

directed downwardly; a means for rotating the substrate holder 5; and a cover 20 that is securable to the substrate holder 5, wherein the cover, together with the substrate holder, are adapted to form a sealed chamber 36 for receiving the substrate 13.

The Examiner has rejected a number of the claims of the instant application as either being anticipated by the An et al reference, or as being obvious over a combination of this reference with one of several other cited references.

The An et al reference discloses an apparatus for treating semiconductor wafers in a developer in order to remove by-products of a previous development from the wafer. The An et al apparatus has a rotatable substrate holder or spin chuck 10, as well as a container 70 that can be filled with a developer and that has a container cover 95. To treat the wafer, developer is introduced into the container 70 and the rotatable spin chuck 10, along with a wafer W disposed thereon, is introduced into the container through an upper opening of the container cover 95 in order to immerse the wafer, or at least the underside of the wafer, in the developer. In so doing, the spin chuck 10 in no way comes into engagement with the container, and furthermore the wafer W is presumably kept spaced from a base of the container 70, since otherwise the wafer could be damaged.

In distinct contrast to the An et al reference, as indicated above, claim 30 of the instant application defines an apparatus for coating substrates. Thus, the present invention can already be distinguished from the An et al reference by this feature, whereby it is respectfully submitted that An et al is not even an appropriate reference under 35 U.S.C. 102 because it does not "teach every element of the claim", as clearly

required by the last section of MPEP section 2131. In particular, whereas the present invention provides for the application of a coating to a substrate, An et al at least partially removes a previously applied layer by means of the developer. An et al neither discloses the application of a layer nor is the apparatus of An et al in a position to coat substrates.

As indicated above, claim 30 provides, among other things, a substrate holder 5 for holding thereon a substrate in such a way that a surface 15 of the substrate that is to be coated is exposed and is directed downwardly.

In contrast to the present invention, the apparatus of An et al holds a wafer in such a way that a substrate surface that is to be cleaned is downwardly exposed. Thus, the difference here is that whereas with the present invention a substrate surface that is to be coated is exposed and is directed downwardly, with An et al a wafer surface that is to be cleaned is exposed and directed downwardly.

As indicated previously, claim 30 of the present invention furthermore provides for a cover that is securable to the substrate holder and that together with the substrate holder forms a sealed chamber for receiving a substrate.

Although it appears that the Examiner has assumed that the container cover 95 of An et al is part of a substrate holder, it is respectfully submitted that this is clearly not the case. In particular, the container cover is merely connected to the container, and in no way is in contact with the substrate holder. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the An et al apparatus in no way provides a cover that is securable to a substrate holder, as required by claim 30 of the instant application.

It is furthermore respectfully submitted that even if one were to assume that the cover 16 of An et al could be considered a cover that could be secured to the substrate holder, this cover clearly does not form, together with the substrate holder, a sealed chamber for receiving a substrate, as required by claim 30.

As can be best seen by Fig. 12 of An et al, the wafer is held on the substrate in such a way that a portion of the upper surface, the side edges and the underside are exposed. The wafer is in no way received in a sealed chamber that is provided for receiving a substrate, nor is such a chamber in any way suggested by this reference. Although the wafer is, of course, introduced into the container 70, the latter clearly does not form a sealed chamber, nor is the container 70 securable to the substrate holder.

The advantages of a chamber that is securable to a substrate holder are discussed in detail on page 3 of the specification of the instant application. In this regard, the apparatus as defined in claim 30 of the instant application makes it possible to provide a more homogeneous coating of substrates, since during the coating process the substrate is accommodated in a sealed chamber.

In view of the foregoing discussion, it is respectfully submitted the apparatus as defined in claim 30 is in no way disclosed or suggested by the apparatus of An et al, which in fact is directed to a different problem and process, and hence to a different type of apparatus. In this respect, it is furthermore respectfully submitted that the same arguments apply to independent method claim 51, which provides for the same limitations as those required for apparatus claim 30.

In view of the foregoing discussion, Applicants respectfully request

reconsideration of the allowability of all of claims 30 – 57 of the instant application. In addition, should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone interview in order to discuss any outstanding issues and to expedite placement of the application into condition for allowance.

Respectfully Submitted,

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